

Jacobus Van Gorden House  
(Eshback Tenant House)  
West side of U.S. Rte. 209,  
1.5 miles north of Egypt Mills  
Egypt Mills vicinity, Lehman Township  
Pike County  
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5180

HABS  
PA,  
EGYPT MILLS,  
2-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

*Reduced Copies of Measured Drawings*

## HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

HABS No. PA-5180

## JACOBUS VAN GORDEN HOUSE

Location: West side of U.S. Rte. 209, 1.5 miles north of Egypt Mill, in Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, Egypt Mill vicinity, Lehman Township, Pike County, Pennsylvania.

USGS Lake Maskenozha Quadrangle, Universal Transverse Mercator Coordinates:  
18.505700.4554030.

Present Owner: J. Russell Eshback.

Present Use: Tenant house.

Significance: The Jacobus Van Gorden House is one of the oldest standing houses in Pike County and is a good example of the early German vernacular stone bank house in eastern Pennsylvania.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION:

## A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Circa 1790 by Jacobus Van Gorden. In a deed of August 1, 1760, Jacobus Van Gorden of Walpack, New Jersey purchased 30 acres of land from Isacc Van Campen in Upper Smithfield Township, Pa. (Northampton County Records, Deed Book vol. C-1, p. 538). Sometime after this he must have moved to Delaware Township as a deed of 1775 lists Jacobus as residing there. He built a house north of Egypt Mills and increased his land holdings to over three hundred acres, most of which were acquired through four patents from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania at unspecified times.

The first indication of the presence of the Van Gordon house is seen in his will. Jacobus died in 1796 bequeathing a "choice of rooms in (his) house" to his wife and fifty-three acres of "low land besides the house and house lot adjoining where he now lives" to his son Moses.

2. Architect: Unknown.
3. Original and subsequent owners:

1775 Northampton County Records, Easton, Pa.  
Deed: 20 Dec. 1775 Recorded 2 March 1781  
Deed Book vol C-1 p. 540  
Daniel Van Campen  
to

Jacobus Van Gorden (of Delaware Township) "...southerly from where Jacobus Van Gorden's old house formerly stood." 1/4 acre 2 1/2 rods, for 7 pounds.

- 1791 Northampton County Records, Easton, Pa.  
Deed: 3 June 1791 Recorded 13 August 1792  
Deed Book vol A-2 p. 127  
Isaac Van Campen  
to  
Jacobus Van Gorden "...being the southwesterly division of an 8 acre lot of land granted to the said Isaac Van Campen by patent dated Sept. 11, 1782 and enrolled in the Rolls Office of the State of Pa., Patent Book N 1 p. 140 18 Sept. 1782." 4 acres 91 perches, for 5 pounds.

It is not known on which of the above plots the stone house is situated.

- 1796 Northampton County Records, Easton, Pa.  
Will: 15 Feb. 1796 Recorded 25 Feb. 1796  
Will Book vol. 3 p. 35  
Will of Jacobus Van Gorden-  
to his wife: "choice of rooms in my house."  
to his eldest son, Moses: 53 acres of "low land besides the house and house lot adjoining where he now lives."  
Note: In 1814 Pike County was created out of Northampton County. Records after 1814 are in Milford, Pa.

- 1824 Pike County Records, Milford, Pa.  
(Pike County created 1814 1814)  
Deed: 3 June 1824 Recorded 21 Nov. 1832  
Deed Book vol. 10 p. 223  
Moses Van Gorden, Sr.  
to  
Moses Van Gorden, Jr. 156 acres, plus 4 acres "...on which is my dwelling house."  
Note: In 1829 Lehman Township was create outof Delaware Township, Pike County.

- 1876 Deed: 28 Feb. 1876 Recorded 4 April 1876  
Deed Book vol. 34 p. 116  
Thomas N. Van Gorden and wife Mary and James D. Brisco and wife Elizabeth  
to  
Randal Van Gorden: "all the equal undivided 2/3 part of...the land... which Moses Van Gorden... possessed." 34 3/4 acres, 30 acres, 44 acres 64 perches, house lot of roughly 4 acres.

- 1876 Deed: 23 June 1876 Recorded 27 June 1876  
Deed Book vol. 34 p. 298  
Randall Van Gorden et. ux.  
to  
Henry C. Bowen
- 1909 Deed: 30 March 1909 Recorded 9 April 1909  
Deed Book vol. 63 p. 140  
Henry C. Bowen  
to  
George L. Nyce  
Including approximately 4 acre house lot "on which the  
dwelling house of said Moses Van Gorden stands."
- 1943 Deed: 29 April 1943 Recorded 29 April 1943  
Deed Book vol. 99 p. 90  
Joseph Nyce (brother and extr. of will of George L. Nyce,  
(deceased)  
to  
J. Russell Eshback, et. ux.

4. Alterations and additions: A large porch, as seen in a 1916 photograph, was probably a late 19th century addition but has since been removed, leaving an 8' x 28' concrete terrace on the southeast side of the building. The building had also been stuccoed over at a later date with lime and sand plaster; left unattended, most of it has since fallen away.

Alterations to the interior are quite recent, including: a modern kitchen in the northwest corner of the ground floor; a bathroom and basin built in the stairhall in the southwest corner on the first floor; and a wood divider added in the attic to form two rooms. A stove flue is located along the southwest wall in the attic.

R. Historical Events and Persons Connected with the Structure:

Moses Van Gorden, who lived for some years in a house adjacent to his father's property, served in the Revolutionary War in the Company of Capt. Johannes Van Etten. At the death of his father in February 1796, Moses inherited 53 acres of "Low land besides the house and house lot (4 acres) adjoining where he now lives," while his mother had a "choice of rooms in (his) house."

Apparently, Moses soon moved into his father's house, putting his old home up for sale. Around the turn of the century, William Nyce purchased the old stone house and some adjoining acreage where he built a new dwelling (recorded by HABS No. PA-1258) (Henn, pp 55-58). The Jacobus Van Gorden House and four acre lot remained in the family until 1876 when it was purchased by Henry C. Bowen. The house that Moses had formerly lived in is no longer standing and the stone

house that presently exists on the William Nyce farm is Jacobus Van Gorden's house which was purchased by George L. Nyce, descendent of William Nyce, in 1909 (Deed, vol. 34, recorded 4 April 1909).

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old views:

Photocopy of photograph of southeast elevation, Henn, William F., The Story of the River Road, 1975, page 59.

2. Bibliography:

a. Primary and unpublished sources:

Deed Book, Northhampton County Records, 1760-1813.

Deed Book, Pike County Court House Records, 1814-1943.

Telephone conversation with Mrs. B.H. Bensley, Box 131,  
Bushkill, Pa. July 1, 1970

b. Secondary and published sources:

Mathews, Alfred, History of Wayne, Pike and Monroe Counties,  
Pennsylvania, P.T. Peck, Philadelphia, 1886, pp. 933-934

3. Likely sources not yet investigated:

Patent Books, Rolls Office, State of Pennsylvania.

Prepared by William C. Badger  
Project Historian  
Historic American  
Buildings Survey  
July, 1970

edited by Kent R. Newell  
HABS team  
June, 1980

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The Jacobus Van Gorden House is one of the oldest existing houses in Pike County area. The one and one-half story bank house was built of local sandstone set in clay mortar and later pointed with lime mortar.

2. Condition of fabric: While the walls and roof framing are sound, the window sills and exterior trim are decaying and are in need of repairs.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The house is 28' (three-bay-front) x 30'-8" in size with a centrally located entrance on the ground floor (southeast elevation) and a side-hall entrance on the first floor (northwest elevation).
2. Wall construction: The exterior walls (20" thick) are composed of undressed gray sandstone rubble and random ashlar and are laid in variable size up to 10" x 48". They were set in clay mortar and were later pointed with lime mortar. The exterior was stuccoed over at a later date with lime and sand plaster.
3. Structural system, framing: The exterior stone walls are load-bearing. An interior post (12" x 12"), a main beam (12" x 12") and joists (4" x 8"), all hewn and mortised, carry the first floor. Partition studs carry the attic floor. The roof rafters (5" to 6" round) are supported on the exterior walls and lapped and pinned at the ridge. There is no ridge piece.
4. Porches: An uncovered terrace of concrete (8' x 28') has been added recently on the southeast side of the ground floor level. An old photo, dated 1916, shows a roof over this porch which has since been removed. The roof was probably a late 19th century addition.
5. Chimneys: On the northeast end of the ridge, an interior end brick chimney exists (25" x 40"). It has two flues and rises three feet above the ridge. At the other end of the ridge is another chimney (17" x 7") which was built for servicing a stove in the attic.
6. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: On the ground floor, the southeast entrance doorway has trim at the head that suggests the pediment form. The door is 1 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub> in thickness with triple vertical panels below and glazed above. A glazed transom light is above the door. The first floor entrance on the northwest side a plain paneled door (3'0" x 6'0").
  - b. Windows: The single movable sash (no balances or pins) windows are nine-over-six-light, with the upper sash being fixed. A small fixed window exists in each gable end.

8. Roof:

- a. Shape and covering: Gabled roof with gray slates.
- b. Cornice and eaves: The simple fascia boards provide minimum projection on the gable ends. The classical cornice (cyma recta mold) at the eaves project twelve inches on the southeast and northwest elevations.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans:

- a. Ground floor: The ground floor has a central entrance into the original kitchen and a room along the southwest wall. A narrow room with an earth floor runs along the northwest wall against the bank.
  - b. Second floor: The entrance to the first floor is on the northwest elevation. It contains a stairhall and three rooms. The fireplace is located in the southeast corner room. A portion of the stairhall has recently been walled off to form a toilet with WC and basin.
  - c. Attic floor: Originally a single large space, the attic was recently divided into two rooms. A stove flue is located on southwest wall.
2. Stairways: The stairs run along the southwest wall from the ground floor to the attic. The ground floor stair is enclosed while the first floor, originally open with a balustrade (square newel with cap, thin plain ballusters, and handrail), is now partially enclosed.
3. Flooring: The floors are of wood throughout the house except in the small storage room on the ground floor along the northwest wall. The floor boards range from 5" to 12" in width and some areas have been covered with linoleum.
4. Wall and ceiling finishes: The interior partitions, walls and first floor ceiling are plastered with wood lath. The ceiling of the ground floor was exposed but has recently been covered with plywood. The underside of the roof is unfinished in the attic.

5. Openings:

a. Doorways and doors:

The doors throughout the house are 1 1/4" in thickness and paneled. They are 2'-8" x 6'-4" with molded trims ranging from 3" to 4 1/2" in width.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: Situated on a terrace on the southeast slope of a ridge that rises 550 feet above bottom farm lands, it is an attractive site overlooking the fertile valley of the Delaware River to the mountain ridges beyond. The axis of the roof ridge bears 44 degrees east of true north.
2. Outbuildings: It was the first farm house on the site; the larger nearby house and the five barn structures are more recent. The old stone house was long used as a tenant house.

Prepared by Prof. Melvin M. Rotsch  
Project Supervisor  
Historic American  
Buildings Survey  
July, 1970

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

This project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in cooperation with the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, supervised by the National Park Service and funded by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The project, which extended from 1967 to 1971, was under the general direction of James C. Massey, Chief of HABS. This structure was measured and drawn in the summer of 1970 under the direction of Melvin M. Rotsch (Texas A & M University), Project Supervisor, by student assistant architects John Albers (University of Florida) and Gary Kreger (University of Virginia) in the HABS field office at Millbrook, New Jersey in the project area of the Tocks Island Reservoir and the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. The historical data was written by William C. Badger, project historian, in 1970. The written data was edited for transmittal to the Library of Congress in the summer of 1980 by Kent R. Newell of the HABS staff. The photographs were taken by George Eisenman in 1970.